



Taka Ishii Gallery

Photography / Film

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Yoshitomo Nara “From Hokkaido, From Taiwan”

Dates: Nov 24 – Dec 26, 2023

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery Photography / Film

Opening Reception: Friday, Nov 24, 17:00 – 19:00

Taka Ishii Gallery Photography / Film is pleased to present “From Hokkaido, From Taiwan”, an exhibition of the works of Yoshitomo Nara, from Friday, November 24 to Tuesday, December 26, 2023. This solo show, Nara’s second at Taka Ishii Gallery, will feature approximately 55 photographs he took in small villages in Hokkaido and Taiwan between 2020 and 2023.

Travel has long been essential to Nara both as an artist and as an individual. After the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, he began embarking on journeys to explore his own roots. In 2014 he visited the island of Sakhalin north of Hokkaido, where his late grandfather had worked, meeting with ethnic minorities who had been profoundly affected by historical events and capturing landscapes and people in the photographic series *Sakhalin*. More recently, he has ventured outside the scope of his family background and frequently visited villages in remote areas of Hokkaido and Taiwan. He has visited Shiraoi-cho and Toyako-cho in Hokkaido many times over the course of several years, building trust within small communities where everyone knows one another and sharing ordinary life with local people. His travels to Sakhalin led him to visit Taiwan, another island with a colonial history, formerly governed by the Netherlands, Qing dynasty China, and then Japan, where he sought out people and scenes in its mountainous areas and small towns. Regardless of the destination, when Nara travels, he also ventures into his own inner landscape. He has said, “Leaving the city for rural areas and frontiers may be a way for me to continue being myself.”

The photographs in this exhibition were taken during recent trips to Hokkaido and Taiwan. The Hokkaido series, shot between 2020 and 2023, documents everyday life in small communities. For the Taiwan series, there is a particular focus on landscapes among the many photographs he took on a trip to Kaohsiung City and vicinity in the spring of 2023. Photos capturing the texture of ordinary life compellingly convey the passage of time and the lives of residents in these places. Nara describes the act of taking photos as “similar to drawing,” and these works present a view of the world through the artist’s eyes and camera lens, enabling viewers to engage directly with his unique sensibility.

Yoshitomo Nara was born in 1959 in Hirosaki City, Aomori, Japan. He earned an MFA from Aichi University of the Arts in 1987. In 1988 he enrolled at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in Germany, and after graduating he continued to live and work in Cologne. Since returning to Japan in 2000, he has continued to exhibit at home and abroad. Recent solo exhibitions include “Life is Only One: Yoshitomo Nara,” Asia Society Hong Kong Center, Hong Kong (2015), “Yoshitomo Nara for better or worse,” Toyota Municipal Museum of Art (2017),

“I Forget Their Names and Often Can’t Remember Their Faces but Remember Their Voices Well,” Dallas Contemporary (2021), “Yoshitomo Nara,” Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei (2021) travelling to Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts (2021); and Tainan Art Museum (2021), “Reach Out to The Moon, Even If We Can’t,” Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth (2023), and “The Beginning Place”, Aomori Museum of Art (2023). Nara’s photographs documenting his creative process and travels have appeared in photo books including *the good, the bad, the average ... and unique. Yoshitomo Nara Photo Book* (Little More, 2003), and *Yoshitomo Nara Photo Book 2003-2012* (Kodansha, 2012). His photography exhibition “Will the Circle Be Unbroken” was held at Daikanyama Hillside Plaza in 2017.

For further information, please contact:

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Tue-Sat 12:00 – 19:00 Closed on Sun, Mon, and National Holidays



Yoshitomo Nara

“Taiwan / Hengchun, Pingtung County”, 2023

Pigment print mounted on aluminum

32.4 x 32.4 cm

© Yoshitomo Nara



Yoshitomo Nara

“Hokkaido / Shiraoi-cho Tobiu”, 2022

Pigment print mounted on aluminum

43.2 x 32.4 cm

© Yoshitomo Nara



Yoshitomo Nara

“Hokkaido / Toyakocho”, 2022

Pigment print mounted on aluminum

43.2 x 32.4 cm

© Yoshitomo Nara



Yoshitomo Nara

“Taiwan / Jianhe, Taitung City”, 2023

Pigment print mounted on aluminum

32.4 x 32.4 cm

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